



St Mary & St Mina's Coptic Orthodox College

"In Whom are hidden all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge"
(Colossians 2:3)

Manual Referencing Code
TL0007

ST MARY AND ST MINA'S COPTIC ORTHODOX COLLEGE

Disability Provisions Guidelines & Procedures

1. POLICY:

The Disability Provisions Policy contains the College's provisions for students with **special needs** during major internal examinations and assessment tasks, referred to by the College as 'Course Work Tasks', consistent with BOSTES provisions for external examinations.

2. PURPOSE:

The College recognises its responsibility to provide equal access to educational opportunities and outcomes for all students, by supporting students with special needs during major examination periods. This is central to its role in assisting all students to maximise their opportunities at this College and to reach their God-given potential.

3. OBJECTIVES:

Applications are made for students with special needs sitting for the Higher School Certificate examinations, who comply with all requirements regarding testing and documentation as stipulated by the BOSTES. Provisions granted by BOSTES for Higher School Certificate exams for qualifying students in Year 12 are similarly implemented in all major College-based examinations and assessments.

The College also recognises the need to provide disability provisions for major College-based examinations and assessments for students in other grades, i.e. Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. Major examinations and assessments refer to mid course examinations, final examinations and assessment tasks which contribute significantly to course marks. A student who has been identified as a likely candidate for disability provisions in their Higher School Certificate year, will receive disability provisions for all major exams, as the College recognises the need for these students to be trained in the use of disability provisions so they are familiar with the processes involved, enabling them to use such provisions most efficiently and effectively. Practising provisions, such as learning how to use a reader and/or writer is essential for equipping students with the necessary skills to express what they have learnt under exam conditions. Making disability provisions available in all years assists the College in achieving the aim of providing equal educational opportunities and access for all students.

4. STRATEGIES / PROCEDURES:

Note. New processes will be introduced with the new funding model in 2016.

a) Determination of Eligibility

Applications for disability provisions are made for students who have:

- an identified learning difficulty.
- a medical condition or difficulty that may compromise their ability to complete an examination or assessment.
- a vision or hearing impairment.

All students currently enrolled at the College who have qualified for Integration funding through the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AIS NSW), automatically meet the criteria for eligibility for disability examination provisions. This forms part of the strategy to assist these students to meet the requirements to be eligible for the credential of a Higher School Certificate when they reach Year 12.

Eligible students can be identified by the College Counsellor, members of staff and the Learning Support Teachers. Individual students and parents may approach the College to apply for disability provisions but they must be able to provide the documentation necessary to support an application in one of the categories listed above. The Learning Support Teachers (Secondary) are responsible for undertaking the testing necessary to accompany and support an application. They are also responsible for compiling all the documentation received.

There are some conditions or situations which are not covered by disability provisions. They include:

- any difficulties experienced in undertaking a course and preparing for the Higher School Certificate Examination.
- the lack of familiarity with the English language. The use of English/foreign language dictionaries is therefore not permitted.
- a condition that may or may not manifest during an examination session e.g. asthma, epilepsy as it will be covered by an illness/misadventure provision, should it occur.

The College does not assume that once all documentation is collected, appropriate provisions for the Year 12 student requested and the application submitted, that provisions will automatically be granted. It is for this reason that students in any grade, who are given disability provisions for College-based exams and assessments, are considered by the Learning Support Teachers and College Counsellor to meet the criteria for application as described in *Table of Disability Provisions* on the Assessment Certification and Examination (ACE) website. While it is important to train students to use provisions properly and to be familiar with processes involved, a balance must be achieved between preparing the student and receiving a successful application when time comes for an application to be submitted. The College would not be providing equal educational opportunities and outcomes by supporting a student during an examination with disability provisions if it was clear that the student did not meet the criteria for application. College-based disability provisions are not given to students indiscriminately.

- Integration students currently enrolled meet the criteria for disability provisions. The need for provisions and the provisions to be requested will be discussed with parents/caregivers during meetings with parents and Learning Support Teachers early in term one of the new school year.
- Other enrolled students who are deemed to be candidates for disability provisions qualify if they meet the criteria for receiving disability provisions and appropriate evidence to support an application can be supplied.
- There are occasions where disability provisions can be granted to students at short notice due to an emergency e.g. a broken arm.

b) Communication with Parents and Students

- At all times, it is made clear to students and parents that the College does not decide the provisions granted for the Higher School Certificate Examinations. The College completes the application with a set of requested provisions but it is BOSTES who decides which of these are approved or declined.
- Information regarding the categories of disability provisions, testing, the disability provisions available and the documentation required is sent home with the student.
- A permission note is attached which must be signed by a parent or caregiver and returned to the Learning Support Teachers otherwise application will not be submitted.
- A date for the return of the permission note and documentation is given to allow the information to be collated on the application, to be submitted by the due date.
- Information regarding documentation for students applying for various medical provisions is given to students. It is the responsibility of the student and parents/caregivers to approach relevant doctors and specialists to obtain the medical information needed to support their application.
- Once a signed permission note has been returned, a time for testing for those students requiring reading, spelling and written tests are arranged at a suitable time.

c) Collation of Applications for Disability Provisions in External Examinations

- Where possible, Learning Support Teachers begin collecting relevant information for Year 12 applications when the students are in Year 11. The application requires a timed written response from students under examination conditions. Collecting a written extended response produced by students in their final exams or an in-class assessment task satisfies this requirement.
- Learning Support Teachers are required to collect College-based information to support a student's application. This includes:
 - collecting comments from teachers for each student.
 - providing additional documentation, such as a letter to explain a request for a specific provision to support an application.
 - testing students as part of the application process. This includes a reading test (Neale Analysis of Reading Form B for year 12 students), the South Australian Spelling Test and a timed essay response on a topic given in the application with no disability provisions allowed. Students requesting a reader and/or writer under 'Learning Difficulty' or requesting a reader and/or writer under 'Medical Difficulty' must be tested and results presented on their application. All testing is conducted within Board of Studies specifications.
 - collecting medical documentation from students as it is supplied.
 - obtaining information to complete the application from College records i.e. student number, date of birth, disability provisions given to the student in the past etc.
 - discussing with each student the disability provisions available to them that should be included on the application.
 - obtaining the signatures of the student and Principal.
 - keeping a copy of all completed applications and documentation.
 - submitting applications by the due date.
- The closing date at the Board of Studies for disability applications is the last day of term 1 each year.

d) Notification of Applications

- Students are notified of the results of their application as they are received at College.
- Students are given their written notification from the Board of Studies, along with any additional explanatory information to take home and discuss with their parents/caregiver.
- Copies of the results are given to the Learning Support Teachers to keep in their student files as well as main student file.

e) Organising Disability Provisions for Major College-Based Examinations and Assessments – Course Work Tasks

- Course work tasks are those tasks that are listed on the subject assessment policy. As such, they contribute to the final assessment of the student.
- Notices asking parents and the general College community to act as volunteer readers and/or writers for disability provisions students will be published in the College's newsletter throughout the year.
- Students using a reader and/or writer are given separate supervision and extra time to compensate for the writing/editing process. Extra time allowed for major exams is 5 mins per half hour of exams.
- Students may have a different reader and/or writer for different exams.
- Students using diabetic provisions or rest breaks due to anxiety conditions in major College-based exams are allowed timed breaks and other provisions they would be entitled to in the Higher School Certificate Examinations.
- Rooms available for use during exams are determined in discussion with the Head of College.
- Readers and/or writers are organised from students who have already completed their own grade exams so they are not compromising their own learning.
- All students assisting with disability provisions can be recognised for their assistance with a College Service Award.
- Where it is necessary to organise adult readers and/or writers for students and none can be arranged from the wider College community, Teacher Aides, other Support Staff and teachers who are able to assist are recruited.
- Timetables are produced by the Learning Support Teacher that specify the student, the exam (subject), time allowed, other disability provisions allowed, the room in which the exam will be completed and the name of the reader and/or writer.
- Copies of the timetable are given to all staff.
- Students acting as readers and/or writers are informed of the date and time of the exam, the subject of the exam, and whom they are assisting with disability provisions.
- Students acting as readers and/or writers are given initial oral instructions to explain procedures and written instructions to refer to and view in their own time. These instructions, taken from those issued by BOSTES, explain what is required of them as a reader and/or writer and the importance of confidentiality.
- No consideration, i.e. allocating extra marks when papers are marked, can be given to a student on the basis of a student's special needs.

f) Special Provisions for Other In-Class Assessments – Class Work Tasks

- Class work tasks are those tasks that are not listed on the subject assessment policy and do not contribute to the final assessment. As they are minor in nature, class teachers themselves can vary requirements and make adjustments according to the needs of the students in their classes.

g) Use of Computers / Laptops:

- There have been occasions where a student has been granted the provision of the use of a PC/laptop in a test/assessment task.
- A College computer and other equipment e.g. a mouse and a USB, need to be booked from the IT Department to be used for the test/assessment task. By using the College computer, it can be assured that devices used to assist such as spell check and grammar check can be disabled. Only the programs needed for the student to be able to respond are loaded on to the computer so the temptation to cheat is avoided.
- The Learning Support Teacher is responsible for liaising between teachers and the IT Department and establishing a file on the College Drive so that teachers can easily deposit exam papers which can be easily retrieved by the IT Department.
- The student is given a hard copy of the exam paper as well as having access to the paper on the computer.
- The student saves responses to the hard drive of the computer and the USB. The Learning Support Teacher needs to check that this has been done correctly.
- A hard copy of the student's responses is given to the teacher marking the paper and an additional copy is kept by the Learning Support teacher in the student's file as an additional back-up measure. The exam paper in the file can be shredded after marked papers have been returned to students.

5. RELATED LEGISLATION, EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITE REFERENCES:

- 5.1 Assessment Certification and Examination (ACE) website 2013 Disability Provisions – Board of Studies NSW www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
- 5.2 Education Act 1990 (NSW)
- 5.3 Prohibited Employment Declaration Form
- 5.4 The (Commonwealth) Privacy Act and Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000
- 5.5 The Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2002
- 5.6 The Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998
- 5.7 BOSTES NSW Home Page – Disability Provisions www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
- 5.8 Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- 5.9 Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005
- 5.10 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992